REPRESENTATION IN THE CHURCH COURTS

—AND THE—

Causes and Evils of Unequal Representation.

An Address delivered October 19th, 1897, before the Synod of New York, by the retiring Moderator, Ralph E. Prime, LL. D.

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MEN, BRETHREN AND FATHERS:—

A year ago, Synod, by its unanimous vote, chose me to be its Moderator. It was the first time in its history when it had placed in the Moderator's chair a Ruling Elder. That was an honor supposed to belong to, and to be reserved solely for, that other Elder, the minister. Some of those who had been most active in bringing about the result, when the fact became fact, were astonished and perhaps stood with some consternation at what it involved, this new departure from time honored and unvarying custom. I was scarcely inducted into office, seated in the Moderator's chair and Synod at its work, before some of my warmest friends among the older men, the very war horses of the Synod, came with deepest concern, and told me that if I should assume myself to open the next meeting of Synod with a sermon, I would certainly be its last Ruling Elder Moderator. Others, among the younger men, and the more enthusiastic, hearing of the prediction, were quite as quick to bring me another prophecy, their's, that if I evaded or failed in any of the duties of prerogatives which belonged to the high office which I occupied, I would not only be the first, but would most certainly be the last Ruling Elder Moderator of this Synod. It was a temptation indeed to be so distinguished among my brethren of the Ruling Eldership as to be the only one called to the office of Moderator of Synod, but it seemed more to be a certain prospect of a grinding up, upon one or the other of

two millstones, and no way of escape. I have sought sincerely and diligently how to be delivered from this dilemma, and how to satisfy both these demands. It was my privilege last winter to have some slight part in the recall to our country of one who became my pastor, and whose words are the delight and the help of all who hear him. I thought and hoped that in this place he would so fill us all with his spirit and his enthusiasm that the irreconcilable demands which embarrassed me would be forgotten in this hour. Again I remembered that Synod was not privileged last year to hear my immediate predecessor in the Moderator's chair to open Synod with a sermon delivered with his own voice. It seemed to me if I could prevail upon him to occupy this year the place as preacher, which last year was his right, that in his eloquence all would forget that anything that became me or this place was evaded. There seemed to me special fitness in either of these brethren speaking to you at this time. My pastor did not respond. I hope you will in some other service enjoy what he may say to you. But my predecessor. Dr. Duffield, in the words to which you have just listened, has filled the demand to the full, and has I trust satisfied the consciences of those who think that none but a preacher can rightfully discharge that function. But then, there are others who have claims. They are some of them among the most honored and noblest men in this Synod. They insist that for the honor of the high office I have filled for a year, I shall bear a part in this opening service. They do not, nor do I, feel that there is any superior right in any one who is a minister to take this part in this exercise. I do not think I am called upon to discuss the question on this occasion, for I have other and very important things to say. But if there were any question, who can doubt but that our book of government by its very terms qualifies whoever you have chosen as Moderator, by virtue of his service as such, to open this session with a sermon, and the General Assembly of our Church at its last session, after serious and pointed attack made upon your act in choosing me to this office and challenging that act as unconstitutional, has approved your minutes without exception, which covers and includes that very act of Synod in such choice of a Ruling Elder. I do not now propose to preach a sermon, in the sense that I usurp any prerogative which belongs to that other elder called the

teaching elder, but we who sit in the pews, think, and have ideas, and if you will bear with me in this hour, I propose to talk to you, to address to you some practical thoughts concerning REPRESENTATION IN THE CHURCH COURTS, AND THE CAUSES AND EVILS OF UNEQUAL REPRESENTATION.

The Church of Jesus Christ is composed of all those who truly believe on Him. Each of its members is the child of the King. All are the sons of God and all are brethren of him, the Son of God, who is the Elder Brother. Among them all are the servants of the King. None has any preeminence, and responsibilities rest upon all according to the ability to serve the Head of the Church. We have been led very far indeed toward regarding the Church and its responsibilities as resting upon the ministry only. Not that I am behind any in awarding all honor to those sons of God who serve specially and exclusively, as did the Levites in the sacred office. But so much as has been made of this in practice as well as in theory, this recognizing the ministry as a sacred college in the Church, a family of privileged ones in Israel, that practically they have come to bear almost all the responsibilities, and there are many who, however they may think in theory, do practically regard the Church as composed only of the ministry. How often do we find the pastor esteemed to be not only the proper person but the only proper person to do the work and perform the service which falls to the lot of the Church, and which can be done and ought to be done in his own sphere, by every Christian, every member of the body of Christ. It seems to me that we may find easily some sufficient and satisfying reasons for this unfortunate condition.

The effect of ordination to the gospel ministry, is magnified, and the pastoral office, that scriptural and most lovely and useful relation, is not magnified. Not that there are wanting those who do regard these things in their right light and in their proper relations, but that the practice of the Church, and also the law of the Church as it has been interpreted, and as it has been acted upon, is all wrong. It seems to me that in this country the way our book, the Form of Government, has been interpreted as to the plan on which the Church courts are organized, tends to produce this very situation. The Form of Government of our Church, it is claimed, recognizes as constituent members of Presbytery, in their own

right, and by virtue simply of ordination, all ordained Presbyterian ministers within the bounds of the Presbytery. So that the ordained minister sits in Presbytery to represent himself alone. He never, not even when a duly installed pastor, represents a particular Church. The Ruling Elder delegate of the Church Session, is its only representative. The legal status of the minister, as member of the Presbytery in his own right, removes from him, when a pastor, any relation to his Church while he sits in Presbytery, and his rights and responsibilities there in no respect differ from those of his fellows who sit with him, and against whose names are written "without charge," so that all ministers alike, pastor and those "without charge," sit in Presbytery as a class, by themselves, a sort of privileged body, without actual individual responsibility for, or to, the churches they may happen to serve. This evil so works and preponderates that there are Presbyteries in which the roll of the ministers, not pastors, and without pastoral charge, outnumbers the roll of pastors, and always outnumbers and outvotes the representatives of the churches and sometimes outnumbers the combined vote of the pastors and the Ruling Elder delegates from the Sessions of the churches. To say that the system does not work ill, is begging the question. It is the principle which is wrong, even if founded upon a correct interpretation of the book. Certainly the situation operates and cannot fail to operate to create a class in the church courts, and to put it in the power of those who represent themselves only, to legislate and decide for those they do not represent.

These things of which I have spoken are conditions, not only tolerated in practice, but, it is said, authorized by our Form of Government. There is hope that even these may in the light of a great future which may beam upon us, even upon us who live now, be corrected and our Church in this country, by a new interpretation, or, if necessary, by an amendment of its Form of Government, comes back to its early simplicity and scriptural form, that which the Apostles founded, and which was the form that came out of the Reformation trials.

But there are other conditions tending to the same end, and fruitful of the same results, and they, too, not only unauthorized but practically forbidden by our book. I refer to the practice of ordaining to the gospel ministry sine titulo.

The Form of Government of our Church recognizes the necessity and rightfulness on some occasions of such an act, but it also recognizes that the occasion must be extraordinary, and so forceful and necessary, that it shall demand, without room for dissent, the exercise of the rite of ordination. The authority for sending out of Evangelists has, no doubt whatever, its foundation in the Scripture. Evangelists are mentioned in Scripture by the name of the office and also by the name of the person who bore the office. Those scriptural times were times which specially called for the exercise of the office of the gospel ministry, not only at the centers where churches were gathered despite persecution and even death, for the sake, and name, and honor of Christ, but the small companies of believers, here and there found in the Roman Empire, in the midst of its paganism and its attendent vices and cruelties, who had and could have no pastors, and needed the ministrations of the men of God who went about to cheer those believers and to teach and to preach the gospel. They were the scriptural Evangelists. The Pagan world that lay in darkness was to be brought to gospel light, and not all were Apostles who went about spreading that light. Those who never had looked upon Him who was crucified, and so did not possess the indispensable qualification for apostleship, were yet qualified to teach the new religion and go about preaching it to the hungry humanity that longed for better things. They were not all pastors, for they had no single fold in charge. They went about from place to place as do our missionaries to-day, telling the story and gathering into the kingdon those who were the called according to God's great and beneficent purpose of salvation. And it seems to me that such a call, such needs, such reasons, are those which are contemplated in our Form of Government as interpreted by our church courts, as the reasons which justify the ordination to the gospel ministry of those not called by the people to serve the Church in the pastorate. The only reasons that can be approved by our Church for conferring by ordination the sanction and authority and responsibility of the gospel ministry upon those whom God's people have not called to the pastorate, are the reasons which appeal to us as calls for service at large to the Church of Christ, and for the exercise of the functions of that ministry, in good faith, for the sake of a world to be saved, and to be called to the light and hope of the gospel. How many of you

must remember abuses of this Presbyterial power of ordination. I have known and seen men ordained to the ministry for reasons which did in nowise take in or consider the rightful purpose of that ministry. One of our Presbyteries recent- ordained sine titulo, a young man, one of its licentiates, who had been called to be an instructor in literature in one of our colleges, and who expected to do the work of a teacher of New Testament Greek in a near-by theological seminary of our Church. What necessity of ordination to qualify for such work, important as it may be? What relation of such work to the work of an Evangelist, as we find types and examples in the Scripture? Is the gift of the Holy Ghost needed in order to make a good professor of belles lettres, or to qualify one to teach New Testament Greek in these days? I do not believe that any of us think to-day, that the miraculous gift of tongues survives, and that God to-day, by an outpour of the Holy Ghost, fits uneducated men for even foreign missions with a knowledge of the languages of the heathen, to whom, we believe He sends them, to call them to Christ and to salvation. If it were so, how much long, dreary use of time spent by every foreign missionary, in acquiring the language of the people to whom he is sent, would be saved and put to use in the preaching of the gospel at once. But such is not God's purpose nor His plan. Brethren and fathers, no such circumstances—no such call as to teach in a college or a seminary justifies the ordination to the ministry. No such exercise of talents is within the line of the exercise of the functions of the evangelist.

Sentiment is a beautiful thing, and specially sentiment in a mother's heart. I can admire and honor the sentiment that fills her life with the desire that her beloved son shall become a minister of the good tidings of salvation to the lost; to carry to the solace of others, that gospel which has been a solace to her in the deepest of waters. I can understand how a mother's years can be spent with prayer, that her beloved son shall enter the sacred office, the mantle of which has rested upon the shoulders of a husband, and of a father, and of a line of holy men of whose blood her son is the last present representative. But I cannot understand why all of that sentiment and love and all those prayers can justify a Presbytery in the laying on of its hands to set apart such a son to the gospel ministry without call. I have in mind another Presbytery

which ordained such a son at the solicitation of such a mother and under just such circumstances and because the beloved son was about to go over the seas, not to tell the story of the cross to dying men in need of salvation, but to complete his studies in some foreign theological school upon a scholarship won by his superior acquirements. How was the cause of Christ honored by that act? What relation in the act of ordination had the work of the Holy Ghost to the special reasons that moved the Presbytery? Did they ordain him to the ministry because he was going to leave his mother? You have no doubt heard or know of scores of other ordinations sine titulo, for equally or more doubtful excuses. Synod has not always been silent on this subject, for, three years ago it reproved the Presbytery of New York, because without any reason given it ordained one as an Evangelist who had no call to the pastorate.

These ordinations sine titulo with sentimental excuses only, and without any real reasons, all go to increase that number of the ministers "without charge," who sit as members of our church courts, and it seems to me distinctly dishonor and belittle the scripturally, and historically, honorable pastoral relation. The source of the relation of the pastor is from the people, and by the people's call. No act of any Presbytery alone can make a pastor. That office is held only because of the act and call of the people. No one can gainsay the fact that the vital and necessary act upon which a pastorate depends is the call of God's flock. Presbytery cannot make the choice, though in proper cases it may withhold its sanction.

And, my dear brethren, this sacred relation is ruthlessly broken up, in cases where it ought to be defended, and defended courageously by you yourselves, in the exercise of the episcopal powers of the Presbytery. There are scores and scores of our Presbyterian churches, run, each by some rich man, of great influence, and also of generous deeds I would not forget. Sometimes a believer in Christ, but often an alien from Israel, no member of the flock, no confessor of Christ, who, successful in the matters of this world, is invited by the people, and sometimes invites himself, to run the Church on business principles, that is to say, to make it pay. There has been many a dear sweet soul, who years upon years, and often for very many years, has baptized

the children and married the young and buried the old of the flock, and who has dealt out to those who came to hear, the things new and old of the pure gospel of salvation and of comfort, but who could not yield to the sensational demands of these times, nor level the pulpit to a lecture rostrum, and for these, or for other reasons, you can find and apply them, does not fill the pews and the church; in the words of the world, does not make it pay a dividend. Such a man has no peace until he gets out, sometimes apparently voluntarily, but really forced out, by the power stronger than the people, and you Presbyters consented to it, and helped it and severed the pastoral relation, and added a good, faithful, useful man to those "without charge," instead of defending the relation you constituted as a Presbytery.

And there is unfortunately another class, who regard some of the work of the God-blessed pastoral relation as drudgery, and want freedom from it, and find it irksome, and fret under it and crave a kind of independence they think they do not find in it, and you Presbyters set these men adrift, and give them their falsely called liberty, and add their names to the list of those "without charge," and they continue to sit and vote in Presbytery.

And there are also more, some of whom never ought to have been in the ministry; who mistook the call; who were self-deceived, and never were pastors. Others deliberately abandon the pastorate to seek more money in other professions and secular trades and businesses. Some who go out of the pastorate, I would not fail to say, go often into entirely reputable and honorable places as secretaries and as editors and as teachers, but none of them in the service of the Church, and the places they find are places where a minister's education and a minister's ordination does not count; and where one having the vow of the life service upon him, it seems to me, has no business to be; where the long work of preparation for service in the Church, and the solemnities of ordination are wasted and thrown away; where the vows for service in Christ's Church are forgotten, and men, otherwise honestly and honorably, devote life to getting gold. Yet all those names were, at their ordination, added to the roll of some Presbytery, and they sit there with all the powers of Presbyters for life.

So, my brethren, we have on the rolls of our Presbyteries,

not only a large number of godly men who have nobly served in the pastorate, and are yet engaged in preaching the gospel, and all of whom we honor, and whose service rendered in that pastoral relation, better than our honor, will be honored on that great day, by the receiving from the Lord the plaudit, "Good and faithful servants," and many of these would have remained pastors if you had stood by them as Presbyters; and we have also a crowd of those who abandon the pastorate to be independent, or to enter business; and we have a host of those who sought ordination for the honor they supposed it gave, who never had a call, who never wanted a call to the pastorate, and who entered into secular business to which they were called; yet all these became members of the Presbytery and qualified to sit in the courts of the Church and there they remained, alike out of the pastorate, but all powerful to legislate for the churches, the causes and needs of which most of them never knew by experience, or sympathy, and cannot know.

Do not, I pray you, mistake the trend of what I say. I would honor the pastorate. What a noble army of bishops we should have, if all our ministers were pastors? Do you know the statistics of the matter? I suggest a study of the statistical reports of the Presbyteries to the end that you may know what can be known as to the pastorate in our Church. A cursory but somewhat careful count of the roll of our Church as shown in those reports, shows that we have seven thousand, one hundred and twenty-nine ministers, seven thousand, six hundred and thirty-one churches, or five hundred and two more churches than ministers, and yet this count shows that there are about four thousand, four hunderd and fifty-nine churches without pastors, and there are only three thousand, one hundred and seventy-two pastors in the whole Church. What of the other three thousand, nine hundred and fifty-seven ministers? Take out the two hundred and thirty-one foreign missionaries and there are yet left three thousand, seven hundred and twenty-six ministers not pastors on account for, and they are more than half the total of all the ministers. There are one thousand, four hundred and sixteen home missionaries, many of whom are pastors and have already been counted as such, but I am credibly informed that they are about four hundred and twenty-five in number and that leaves nine hundred and ninety-one, which number we deduct and there are yet three thousand, seven hundred and twenty-five

ministers not pastors, or more than one-half of the total of all the ministers in the Church, and all of them sit and vote in the Presbytery. What other Church than ours in this land must admit such humiliating figures? And we are told that this proportion of ministers out of the pastorate is steadily increasing. And alas! we are told that the roll of the relief fund is also steadily increasing. What effect upon those in the pastorate would it have, if none of the ministers but the pastors were members of the Presbytery? Would it not make the pastorate more secure? What effect upon these out of the pastorate would it have, if none of the ministers but the pastors sat in Presbytery? Would it not cause the stated supplies and the "without charge" at once to seek the call to the pastorate?

This condition of things which exists to-day in our Church, is neither American, nor English, nor Scotch, nor Presbyterian. In England, no minister sits in Presbytery, save as an actual pastor or being a doctor of divinity in a theological school, unless indeed the special relation of a particular minister be such, as to induce Synod, its highest body, to confer upon him specially the right to sit and vote in Presbytery. In Scotland no minister sits in Presbytery, unless he be in fact an installed pastor, save only in the case of the teachers or Doctors of Divinity in the theological colleges. A thing peculiar to those countries is found in the fact that an ordained minister without charge is often chosen to serve as Ruling Elder in a particular church, and is sometimes chosen to represent that church in the higher church courts, and so it came about, in the recent past, that an ordained minister of the free church of Scotland, being without pastoral charge, elected and serving a particular church as one of its ruling elders and sitting in Presbytery as the delegate from its Church Session, was chosen as a Ruling Elder representative to the Free Church General Assembly and was there elected and served as its Moderator, and when the time for the next Assembly arrived, having no right in any of the Church Courts as a minister, he opened the Assembly as a Ruling Elder with a sermon. To say that the state of things with us in our Church is not American, is also to say that it is not Presbyterian, for the genius of Presbyterianism is that in theory it is a representative Church government. This condition, where the greater part of those who compose the Presbytery, the most important, the unit, or foundation as it were, of our system of higher Church

Courts, is composed of individuals who represent no one and stand for no one but themselves, is a condition which makes a privileged class, a college of princes, a body of Lords in the Church, who only need to take one step further, and like the house of Lords in England, the United States Senate, or the House of Bishops in the Protestant Episcopal Church, sit alone, to make the existing anomaly in Presbyterianism patent to the eye of all. In this respect our Presbyterianism is different from that of the land from which we took it.

No Presbyterian minister in Scotland or in England thinks any less of his relation to the Church or of his prerogatives or position, as minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, because, not being a pastor, he does not sit in the Church Courts, and I am persuaded that none of our American Brethren who sought the Gospel ministry for right motive and who were not mistaken as to the call, will take umbrage at what I have said, or would feel himself taken down one whit, if he occupied, not being a pastor, the same relation to the Church as that occupied in like case by the English and Scotch brethren. I am persuaded if it were with us as in Scotland, the home of Presbyterianism, or in England from whence our Puritan and many of our Presbyterian ancestry came, we should here regard with higher respect and with livelier affection the Scriptural relation of the pastor to his people. I am also persuaded that if such were the case with us, we should have no classes in the Church Courts and the roll would be a roll of Church representatives, and not of ministers and elders; and I am persuaded too, that responsibility, long resting on the ministers as a class, would devolve upon, and be borne by, all Church officers, and all the Christian people to whom those responsibilities belong. Brethren, how do you account for the proverbial absence of the Ruling Elder from the Church Courts? If he felt the responsibility upon him as well as on the minister he would be there. If the Church felt that the responsibility was on him they would chose men capable to bear all there is to be borne. Piety is a necessary qualification for an elder, so also a good reputation. But if special responsibilities rested upon the Ruling Elder the qualification would be met in his choice by the Church.

And now assuming that we regard it desirable that, according to the American idea, and the Presbyterian idea, only those who really represent us should legislate and

decide for us, follow me for a few moments further in tracing the history of the conditions of which we complain.

It is not difficult to see that the parity of the Eldership is at the bottom of the equal relation in the Church courts of the pastor and the Ruling Elder. Those who systematized our Presbyterian order came out of the throes and persecutions and the fires of the Reformation, and they detested with all their natures every form of prelatism, and the government of the Church by ministers was too much like a government by priests to sit well with them. The same spirit in all its violence is still found in some Scotch churches (I have seen it in Canada) which turns the back of every worshiper upon the minister when he leads the devotion of the people. The English Church at Geneva furnished the first book of order which was used in the Scotch Church, but it was soon found unsuited to a Church of many congregations. The law of the land recognized the General Assembly of the Church, which in 1560 approved the first book of discipline which John Knox and five others had drawn up. The General Assembly was supreme and under it were twelve superintendents. This gave place in 1578 to the second book of discipline, which provided for the four Assemblies, or Presbyteries, the Session, the Presbytery, the Synod and the Assembly. In those books the existence of a minister without charge was an unknown thing. The minister was always a pastor and a bishop, and representation of the Church was by the minister and an elder. In the first book of the Pardovan Collections, Title XII, a Presbytery is said to consist of "all the pastors within the bounds and one Ruling Elder from each parish therein..... and where there are collegiate ministers that Session may send as many ruling elders." This arrangement produced in fact an equal number of the two sorts, ministers and Ruling Elders. Go as far back as you will in the history of Presbyterianism and the earliest constitution of a Presbytery and you will find it always so—an equal number of ministers and Ruling Elders. In Principal Hill's Theological Institutes, a book respected with the Pardovan Collections, and become also a book of antiquity, the same equally balanced Presbytery is recognized, and the reason is in very terms stated (I quote), "So that the number of ministers and elders in any meeting of Presbytery may be equal."

In McPherson's Hand Book of Presbyterianism, we read:

"The membership of the Presbytery consists of all the ministers of full regular charges within its district, together with a representative Ruling Elder for each congregational session. The evident principle which determines this arrangement, is the securing equal representation of the two orders of Presbyters," and he goes on to show that the variations which are exceptional do not vary the principle. The Canadian Presbyterian Church admits ministers as members of Presbytery only when they are pastors, or employed by the General Assembly in church work, or are foreign missionaries, or specially enrolled by act of the General Assembly. Our own Form of Government, if practice is to control its terms and interpret its provisions, is a curious medley of principle and overriding of principle. It provides as to the General Assembly that it is composed of an equal delegation of bishops and elders from each Presbytery, and the quota of each Presbytery is at least two, one a minister and one an elder, and the representation always increases by twos, one a minister and one an elder. The Synod may be composed of all the bishops and an elder from each congregation in its district or of equal delegations of bishops and elders elected by the Presbyteries. The Presbytery consists of all the ministers in number not less than five, and one Ruling Elder from each congregation within a certain district. Every congregation which has a stated pastor has a right to be represented by one elder and every collegiate church by two or more elders, in proportion to the number of its pastors, and when two or more congregations are united under one pastor all such congregations shall have but one elder to represent them. All this language concerning Presbytery proceeds upon the theory of the equality of representation of ministers and Ruling Elders in all the Church courts. When, however, the abnormal conditions of an organized church without a pastor comes up, for the sake of the representation of that church, the Presbyterian and American idea of necessity of representation, it is allowed an elder representative. The same book regards the term "bishop" as applicable only to a pastor. Chapter IV of Bishops or Pastors, says: "The pastoral office is the first in the Church both in dignity and usefulness. The person who fills this office hath in Scripture obtained different names, expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ he is termned a bishop. As he feeds them

with spiritual food he is termed a pastor." In each case it is the person who fills the pastoral office. No one will claim that the ordained minister without charge is anywhere in the book described as a pastor. No one will claim that the ordained minister without charge has oversight of a flock, and if not, then he is a bishop only when he is also a pastor. Chapter XV is entitled, "Of the Election and Ordination of Bishops or Pastors and Evangelists." and no one reading this title and the provisions of that chapter will argue that the word "bishop" in any of its parts refers to any but a pastor. Now brethren, every bishop or pastor is a minister. But the converse is not true that every minister is a pastor or is a bishop. What did the framers of our Form of Government mean, when in describing the Synod and the General Assembly, they used the words which exclude ministers not pastors from right to sit in those courts? Clearly Bishops and Ruling Elders only are to compose a Synod, or the General Assembly. No ministers without charge can sit in either of them. The form of the commission of the Commissioner of the General Assembly, as prescribed in section II of chapter XXII of the form of government, applies to a bishop of a congregation only, i. e., to a pastor only and never to an unsettled minister. The letter of the Constitution by this requires that the minister commissioner must be bishop of a congregation. After the disruption of the Church, and from 1839 to 1845 inclusive, ministers, members of the General Assembly were always called "bishops" and the minutes recorded them as such by title in the O. S. Church. Why did they when they described the Presbytery use the old word "minister," the same used in all the Scotch and English books to describe a member of the Presbytery? Did they mean to give it a new sense, another sense, than that in which used in those Scotch and English books? In the Synod and Assembly there must be commissioned an equal number of Bishops and Ruling Elders. So we require. The Scotch and English books have always required the same equality in constituting of the Presbytery. Did our predecessors, those who framed our book, mean to reverse that rule and abrogate it? I am prepared to say that I think they did not. It seems to me that we may find words of qualification and description in the same book, which will prove beyond question my contention, and I will accurately quote them. The chapter X of the Form of Gov-

ernment is the chapter that treats of Presbytery. I have before referred to it. Its section II reads thus: "II. A Presbytery consists of all the ministers in number not less than five and one Ruling Elder from each congregation within a certain district." Now what sort of a minister is this who is a member of Presbytery? Turn to chapter XI and read with me. Take its first section: "I. As a Presbytery is a convention of the Bishops and Elders within a certain district, so a Synod is a convention of the Bishops and Elders within a larger district, including at least three Presbyteries." Here we have words, "as" and "so," which as clear as sunlight limit and qualify the kind of ministers of whom the Presbytery is composed and those words demand that those ministers who sit in Presbytery must not only be ministers, but must be ministers who are bishops or pastors. Take section II of the same chapter, as also section II of the chapter on General Assembly and we shall find the same men called ministers in several places who are in other places called bishops. Hence "ministers" in the chapter on the Presbytery are the "bishops" in section I of the chapter XI on the Synod. They only can be ministers who are also bishops because they are pastors. Brethren, read for yourselves. I ask your intelligent consideration of the law as it is; not as some would have it. Interpret it conscientiously and according to the law as written, and as coldly and dispassionately as your ordination vows require for loyalty to the constitution of the Church. It is better to be "right than to be president." Be right in this matter though the heavens fall. I am persuaded that the framers of our book used the word ministers in the old Scotch and English sense, meaning as to each of the church courts, that the minister was always one who is also a pastor. There is no reason why all ordained ministers should sit in one court and only such as are bishops sit in the other courts. And further why secure equality of representation in Synod and Assembly and not in Presbytery? There is no reason. There are more cogent and forceful reasons why the courts nearest the churches should be most truly representative. The whole Presbyterian idea of the foundation of its government in representation and of equal members of the ministers and Ruling Elders in the church courts is against the system existing, at least in practice in our American Presbyterian Church. A Presbytery is not a body to take care of the ministers, nor for their sake, but

its great function is to take care of its churches. If it has other functions which relate to the ministers, it is not for their sake that it exists, but for the sake of the churches. The Scripture does not make the ministry a class outside of the Church, but in and for the Church. The very work itself means service. The servant of the Church is in the Church and when the court legislates for the Church, it legislates for him as part of the Church.

I have no fear of offending any of my brethren who are of the ministry by what I have said. I beg, however, not to be misunderstood. No one wants to take away any rights or prerogatives of any of the ministers. The only question is, what are their real, lawful rights and prerogatives. Those who have served faithfully in the pastorate, and are now waiting for their rewards for faithful service, want no illogical relation, no standing that cannot be defended. They have served and loved the Church we love and for which Christ gave His life, and they have loved it for its sake, and not for their own sake. They rejoice in everything that adds to its glory, that adds to its defenses, that adds to the glory of Christ, its great Head. This question has been a slumbering fire in many spots. You have heard it whispered about for years. Overwhelming preponderance of ministers without charge in some of the Presbyteries has intensified the unrest. Is it for fear that it has not been more openly treated? If what I have said may open a discussion which shall end in establishing the condition of things that exists, on a firm and consistent basis, the rule in Synod and General Assembly, as in Presbytery always the same, ministers "without charge," rightfully to sit in two higher courts as in the lower or in establishing the great Presbyterian and Scotch and English and Reformation and Protestant idea, of an equal number of ministers and elders, in all the courts of the American Church, then it will not be in vain that you have elected a Ruling Elder to be your Moderator who said to you openly some things that it was new to speak openly of, and I shall believe that you may think it wise in the future to elect others.

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